

# DOINGWHATWORKS



## Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

### Using Peer Collaboration and Self-Reflection to Engage With Text

Garfield Elementary School, Kansas • November 2010

Topic: Improving K-3 Reading Comprehension

Practice: Engage Students With Text

#### Highlights

- Erin Vatne, a third- and fourth-grade teacher at Garfield Elementary School, describes the structure of small-group discussions and the value of using talking chips to ensure equal student participation.
- Center activities and small-group discussions are used to engage students in peer collaboration since it allows students to think on a text with each other.
- Students self-reflect and rate themselves on their discussion participation.

#### About the Site

Garfield Elementary School

Garden City, Kansas

#### Demographics

81% Hispanic

13% White

4% Other

2% Black

83% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

63% English Language Learners

12% Special Education

Garfield Elementary's engaging and interactive culture is an important component in meeting the individual needs of its high migrant and English language learner student population. At each grade level, staff work to incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening into lessons.

- Cooperative learning strategies are used to facilitate student discussion around texts.
- Students learn to identify and implement appropriate metacognitive and reading comprehension strategies for selected texts.
- Teachers model reading comprehension strategies using puppets and props.
- The reading coach works one-on-one with teachers to provide feedback on instruction and to model effective practices.

## Full Transcript

### Slide 1: Welcome

Welcome to Using Peer Collaboration and Self-Reflection to Engage With Text.

### Slide 2: Introducing Erin Vatne

Hi, my name is Erin Vatne. I teach third and fourth grades at Garfield Elementary in Garden City, Kansas.

### Slide 3: Chosen texts

Today the first reading group is reading a book called *An Icy Adventure*. The second reading group is discussing a book called *Amazing Birds of Antarctica*. These books are at their instructional levels and go along with the whole-group texts that we are working on this week. Our goal today is to discuss the strategies we used while reading the text.

### Slide 4: Comprehension strategies

In my classroom the main reading comprehension strategies that I teach are retell/summarize, questioning, monitor/clarifying, visualizing, predicting and inferring, making connections, and evaluating. The strategies are taught and modeled during whole-group reading and modeled and practiced again during guided reading.

#### Slide 5: Use of strategies

Students should be aware of the comprehension strategies and how they are using them while reading. We talked about tricky words that the students may have come across in their independent reading of the text, and then we started our discussion based on their discussion prompts.

The cooperative learning strategy that I used in my small-group discussion is talking chips. All students have a chance to participate in the discussion when they use talking chips. They each start with a pile of chips, and when their pile is gone they are done with that portion of the discussion.

My goal is to move the students away from using talking chips and getting them to discuss the texts independently. The end goal is for students to be able to be metacognitively aware of the strategies that they are using while reading to help their comprehension strategies.

#### Slide 6: Review and discussion

First, we are looking at our text and looking to review what we prepared on our discussion card, and then we are talking about tricky words and how we can decode those tricky words. Students set their cards out so we can begin our discussion. Each student gets four or five talking chips. I call on a student to get the discussion started. After a student reads their discussion, then other students chime in with what their thoughts and opinions are and how they comprehended the text.

#### Slide 7: Using sticky notes

The sticky notes students are using are to record their thinking while they are reading. Many of the students put their answers to the prompts that they were given on sticky notes, and other students write questions that they have while reading the text and connections.

While reading, one student used their sticky note to ask a question. She wrote, “I wonder if they put dates or times or years or months or days in this book.” Another student who was working with the questioning strategy wrote, “Why do they lay their eggs on the ground?” She was referring to some of the content in the book about birds in Antarctica.

#### Slide 8: Helping students go deeper

It’s challenging to find texts for the lower reading levels that lend to deeper discussion. And sometimes it’s hard for all groups to get deeper into the text with their comprehension strategies. So I usually prepare some prompts or questions to help with the discussion in case we get stuck.

Slide 9: Helping students get comfortable with strategies

It is important to model and discuss with the students, showing them how to talk about the comprehension strategies they are using. This takes a lot of time for students to become comfortable sharing about how they use their strategies.

Slide 10: Participating with peers

I give students opportunities to participate with their peers in both small-group discussions, whole-group discussions, and at independent centers. Small-group discussions are the height of peer collaboration as students are sharing their thinking on a text with each other. At some centers they work with someone who is at or around their same level of reading ability to play interactive games that help them practice those skills.

Slide 11: Using familiar content

It's also helpful to teach the cooperative learning strategies using content that the students feel comfortable with at the beginning so they can learn the process instead of worrying about the content. Once students have learned how each strategy works, they will be able to use them with more challenging content.

Slide 12: Reflection

As I end the lesson I have students think about how they discussed for the day. I often ask: "How do you feel your discussion went? Did you look at the speaker? Did you take turns talking? Did you build off of each other or were you thinking about only what you wanted to talk about?" And I often have the students think about how they would rate themselves on their discussion to close the discussion for today.

Slide 13: Learn more

To learn more about Using Peer Collaboration and Self-Reflection to Engage With Text, please explore the additional resources on the Doing What Works website.